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## Social Media: Insight on the Internal Dynamics of Mexican DTOs

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## **Social Media: Insight on the Internal Dynamics of Mexican DTOs**

### **Abstract**

Recent literature analyzes the use of social media by terrorist organizations, gangs, and other criminal groups. Despite the valuable insight that this approach provides on these actors, the use of social media by Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) remains largely understudied. This study provides information on the scope and nature of Mexican DTOs' online presence, a demographic snapshot of their users, and insight into the internal dynamics of these organizations through the systematic study of primary-source data collected from 150 Facebook accounts likely to belong to members of Mexican DTOs. This information gleaned from social media has the potential to enrich our knowledge and understanding of these organizations and to serve as a guide for more effective and assertive anti-narcotics policies and strategies in Mexico and Latin America. Finally, this study raises new questions and provides avenues for future research on specific issues and trends related to DTOs observed throughout the analysis.

## Introduction

Today, Mexican DTOs pose the most direct and severe security threat to the Mexican State, and represent one of the most significant sources of instability in Latin America. The recurrent failure of national and international anti-narcotics strategies in the past decades and the continued empowerment of these criminal organizations demonstrate a persistent and widespread lack of understanding of the nature, character, and internal dynamics of these actors. In this context, it is clear that new approaches to the study of Mexican DTOs are urgently needed.

In recent years, scholars and law enforcement agencies around the world have started to analyze the use of social media by members of terrorist organizations and gangs. This analysis has contributed to a better understanding of the social networks and internal dynamics of these groups. However, despite the growing significance of this practice in the fields of terrorism and crime, the use of social media by members of Mexican drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) remains largely understudied. The present study intends to contribute to the literature in the field by providing first systematic qualitative and quantitative analysis of the use of Facebook by members of Mexican drug cartels. For this study, primary-source data was collected from 150 Facebook accounts likely belonging to members of six Mexican DTOs. The data was analyzed over a three-month period. The analysis sheds light on the scope and nature of the use of Facebook by members of these organizations and addresses controversial themes such as recruiting, the spread of narco-culture, and the use of this platform for organizational purposes. This study further highlights the value of the information that is available online, and intends to open a debate and spark an interest in the use of the Internet in general, and social media in particular, by members of DTOs in Mexico and Latin America for the development of future research in the field.

### Mexican DTOs Today

As Phil Williams stated during the 1990s, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) pose a security threat at the individual, state, and international system levels.<sup>1</sup> This threat has only become more imminent and

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<sup>1</sup> Phil Williams, "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security," *Survival* 36:1 (Spring, 1994): 96-113, available at: [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph\\_reports/MR880/MR880.ch14.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR880/MR880.ch14.pdf).

complex in the last decades with the fast-paced developments in transportation, telecommunications, and economic activities inherent to globalization. As transnational criminal organizations, Mexican DTOs have taken advantage of these developments to expand their activities and influence. Today, these groups are indisputably the most powerful criminal actors in Mexico and some of the most influential in the region. Their capacity to interrupt the provision of a safe environment and damage the social fabric of the country (individual level), to challenge the state monopoly of violence (state level), and to penetrate neighboring states (international system level), evidences the alarming security threat that these organizations' power and activities pose today.

Despite the multiple national and international anti-narcotics efforts in Mexico such as the Merida Initiative<sup>2</sup> and the War on Drugs, Mexican DTOs continue to gain power and control over the country. The constant failure of these strategies demonstrates the persistent misunderstanding of these organizations and their members, and highlights the urgency to develop new approaches to enrich our knowledge of these actors. Similar concerns grew in the field of terrorism after it became evident that the policies implemented after the 9/11 attacks had failed to significantly reduce the incidence of terrorism, and terrorists were adapting rapidly to counterterrorism policies and technological advances.

The analysis of social media has gained relevance as an alternative approach to the study of terrorist organizations, particularly since the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2013. In 2015, Jytte Klausen demonstrated that social media is a valuable source of insight and intelligence on the internal dynamics of ISIS.<sup>3</sup> Klausen analyzed 59 Twitter accounts belonging to Western foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, "The Twitter Census,"<sup>5</sup> which analyzed 20,000 Twitter accounts belonging to ISIS supporters, highlighted the value of the information and insight on a terrorist organization and its members that could be obtained from the analysis of

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<sup>2</sup> "Merida Initiative," *U.S. State Department*, available at: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/merida/>.

<sup>3</sup> Jytte Klausen, "Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* (December 9, 2014) available at: <http://bir.brandeis.edu/bitstream/handle/10192/28992/KlausenArticle2014.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan, "The ISIS Twitter Census. Defining and Describing the Population of ISIS Supporters on Twitter," *Brookings*, March 5, 2015, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-isis-twitter-census-defining-and-describing-the-population-of-isis-supporters-on-twitter/>.

social media accounts. Winter concluded that social media has become a powerful vehicle for the massive dissemination of propaganda<sup>6</sup> and Fisher highlighted the importance of understanding terrorists' use of the Internet, and in particular, terrorists' use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Tumblr in order to generate efficient counter-terrorism strategies.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, think tanks and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)<sup>8</sup> and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies,<sup>9</sup> are increasingly devoting resources to the analysis of terrorists' online activity. These are only a few examples of recent efforts that highlight the growing importance of the analysis of social media to gain insight and intelligence into terrorist organizations.

Similar research has been incorporated into the study of criminal organizations and, in particular, to the study of gangs in recent years. Womer and Bunker conducted one of the first qualitative studies in the field in order to better understand how “*Sureños* gangs” and Mexican DTOs were using the Internet, and how their use of this tool could be compared with that of terrorist organizations.<sup>10</sup> Through several keyword searches in common Internet search engines, the authors identified those websites in these groups that had a larger footprint, and then analyzed the purpose of their presence on these platforms. The study found that *Sureños* gangs tend to use these platforms to “brag about their exploits” and to “notify members of meetings and events.” Womer and Bunker concluded that that Mexican DTOs utilized the Internet for the same purposes, but had a notable engagement in the promotion of narco-culture, narco-religion, and narco-lifestyle. Building upon Womer and Bunker's contributions, Décary-Hétu and Morselli conducted a keyword search through the search engines of Facebook and Twitter and found that Canadian gang members are increasingly participating

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<sup>6</sup> Charlie Winter, “The Virtual ‘Caliphate’: Understanding Islamic State’s Propaganda Strategy” *Quilliam*, 2015, available at: <https://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/the-virtual-caliphate-understanding-islamic-states-propaganda-strategy.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ali Fisher and Nico Purcha, “Tweeting for the Caliphate: Twitter as the New Frontier for Jihadist Propaganda,” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, June 25, 2013, available at: <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/tweeting-for-the-caliphate-twitter-as-the-new-frontier-for-jihadist-propaganda>.

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.memri.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://www.defenddemocracy.org/>.

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Womer and Robert J Bunker, “*Sureños* Gangs and Mexican Cartel Use of Social Networking Sites,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21:1 (2010): 81-94; Womer and Bunker refer to gangs from Central America, and in particular, from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras as *Sureños* gangs.

on social networking sites.<sup>11</sup> Such participation is highly individualized and there is significant interaction between gang members on these platforms. Similar to Womer and Bunker, the authors conclude that the promotion and exhibition of gang culture online is a factor that could facilitate the process of recruitment in the real world and that social networking sites make “criminal groups a more accessible phenomenon for a larger portion of the population” by creating new spaces that enable the interaction of gang members with a “wide number of people who would probably never have been exposed to their lifestyle through physical interactions.”<sup>12</sup>

Castillo has analyzed the use of Facebook by Mexican DTOs as a tool of asymmetrical warfare.<sup>13</sup> According to Castillo, Mexican DTOs are resorting to “persuasive and coercive messaging conducted through print, audiovisual, cultural and electronic media” in the war against the Mexican State. In his study, Castillo notes that the Internet in general, and social media platforms such as Facebook in particular, are being used by DTOs as a tool to promote their lifestyle and to coerce their audience. Along these lines, Campbell has argued that narco-propaganda should be treated as “a powerful political discourse.”<sup>14</sup> Like Guevara,<sup>15</sup> Campbell has conducted a systematic study of narco-propaganda expressions such as videos, graffiti, blogs, narco-corridos, and the use of mass media. However, while Castillo Campbell and Guevara provide a systematic and qualitative analysis of the content being shared on social media by Mexican DTOs, their studies do not provide quantitative insight of the scope of the online presence of the members of these organizations and their internal dynamics. Furthermore, their work does not discuss the differences and similarities in the use of Facebook or social media across DTOs.

With only several notable exceptions such as Womer and Bunker and Castillo, the study of the social media presence of Mexican DTO members is usually approached from a journalistic perspective. Since 2012, Mexican and international media outlets have capitalized on the exposure of the luxurious

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<sup>11</sup> David Décary-Héту and Carlo Morselli, "Gang Presence in Social Network Sites," *International Journal of Cyber Criminology* 5:2 (2011): 876- 890, available at: <http://www.cybercrimejournal.com/davidcarlo2011julyijcc.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Juan-Camilo Castillo, “The Mexican Cartels' Employment of Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) as Tools of Asymmetrical Warfare,” available at: [http://icsa.cs.up.ac.za/issa/2014/Proceedings/Workshop/3\\_Final\\_Document.pdf](http://icsa.cs.up.ac.za/issa/2014/Proceedings/Workshop/3_Final_Document.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Howard Campbell, “Narco-Propaganda in the Mexican “Drug War,”” *Latin American Perspectives* 41:2 (March 1, 2014): 60-77.

<sup>15</sup> America Y. Guevara, "Propaganda in Mexico's Drug War," *Journal of Strategic Security* 6:3 (2013): 131-151.

lifestyles of the Mexican DTOs' elite. The articles often include pictures from Instagram and Twitter accounts allegedly belonging to DTO members, and lack significant analysis on the images or the accounts. In 2015 José Luis Montenegro, a Mexican journalist, published a book titled "Narco Juniors,"<sup>16</sup> which covered the issue of the presence of the *Sinaloa* Cartel's elite on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The author takes a look at the luxurious lifestyle of the "narco juniors," the sons and daughters of top cartel leaders, by analyzing more than 70 Twitter accounts belonging to these individuals and conducting interviews with important members of the organization. Montenegro concludes that the exposure of the luxurious lifestyle of the narco juniors on social media and the openness of top leaders of the organization to be interviewed evidences the widespread impunity that the organization's elite enjoys. While these journalistic contributions demonstrate that Mexican DTOs have a significant and visible presence on social media, they have remained superficial and sensationalistic, lacking rigor and a systematic approach. Furthermore, the fact that these works have focused solely on the elite of Mexican DTOs is not only reductionist in nature, as the elite only represents a minority of the group, but is also a direct contribution to the distortion of the reality of the Mexican DTO lifestyle, and to the reinforcement of the aspirational model that these organizations already represent for many.

While the academic discussion on the role of social media in narco-propaganda,<sup>17</sup> drug-related violence,<sup>18</sup> and narco-culture<sup>19</sup> is growing, none of the academic contributions are based on actual studies and analyses of social media nor refer to concrete qualitative or quantitative studies in the field. In this context, the cyber presence of Mexican DTOs has been mostly treated as common knowledge in academia. To date, there is no concrete evidence of the scope and nature of the presence of Mexican DTO members on social media and there is no consensus on the nature of these groups' activities online. This is despite the fact that the study of these elements in other fields

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<sup>16</sup> Montenegro, José Luis, *Narco Juniors* (Mexico City, Mexico: Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial Mexico, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Lou Gullec, "Communication as a Weapon: Propaganda in the Mexican Drug War," 2015 available at: <https://infocusrevue.com/2015/03/13/communication-as-a-weapon-propaganda-in-the-mexican-drug-war/>.

<sup>18</sup> Max G. Manwaring, "A "New" Dynamic in the Western Hemisphere Security Environment: The Mexican Zetas and Other Private Armies," *Strategic Studies Institute*, September 2009, available at: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=940>.

<sup>19</sup> Alma Guillermoprieto, "The Narcovirus," *Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies* (Spring 2009): 3-9, available at: <http://clasarchive.berkeley.edu/Publications/Review/Spring2009/pdf/BRLAS-Spring2009-full.pdf>.

(e.g., terrorism, criminal gangs) has proven highly beneficial to understanding the organizations in question.

## Methodology

For the purposes of this study, the author collected and analyzed primary source data from the observation and documentary analysis of 150 active Facebook accounts likely to belong to members of the six most prominent Mexican DTOs: Los Zetas, the Gulf Cartel, the Sinaloa Cartel, the Beltrán Leyva Organization, the Caballeros Templarios, and La Familia Michoacana. Primary data was collected through a broad keyword search conducted on Facebook's built-in search engine, following the model implemented by Womer and Bunker<sup>20</sup> and Décary-Hétu and Morelli.<sup>21</sup> The keywords used for this search were: *Los Zetas, Los Zs, Grupo Los Zetas, Cartel del Golfo, CDG, Cartel de Sinaloa, CDS, Virus Antrax, Escuela Virus Antrax, Los Antrax, Empresa MZ, Empresa Mario Zambada, Empresa Quintero, Familia Michoacana, La Nueva Fuerza Michoacana, Caballeros Templarios, Templario, Templarios, Beltrán Leyva, Beltrán-Leyva Cartel, Empresa Beltrán Leyva, BL*, among others.

Each account found in the keyword search was analyzed and incorporated into a database, which included variables and sub variables for the analysis of the scope, demographics, and internal dynamics of these groups. Only those accounts that exhibited an explicit affiliation to the cartel, account activity in the last two months, and a network of at least 200 friends were included. The product of the process of primary source data collection was a comprehensive dataset that allowed me to define the scope of the presence and footprint of Mexican DTOs on Facebook. Every account was analyzed thoroughly using qualitative and quantitative methods. This analysis included, but was not limited to, the analysis of the content posted by the user between 2014 and 2016, the comments in such posts, the photographs included in the account dated from 2015 and 2016, the content shared by the user such as generic images, videos, etc. and the account's network of friends to identify other members of the organization.

Due to the sensitive nature of this study, an alternative Facebook account was created on January 2016. All of the searches were conducted through this account and this study was at all times discrete and indirect, as no interaction or contact with the account owners was established.

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<sup>20</sup> Womer and Bunker, "Sureños gangs."

<sup>21</sup> Décary-Hétu and Morselli, "Gang Presence in Social Network Sites."

First, studies in the field of terrorism, crime, and sociology have demonstrated that “Facebook constitutes a rich site for researchers interested in the affordances of social networks due to its heavy usage patterns and technological capacities that bridge online and offline connections.”<sup>22</sup> However, as the literature review for this study demonstrates, few qualitative and quantitative studies have been conducted on Facebook with the purpose of understanding the internal dynamics of DTOs and gangs in general, and Mexican DTOs in particular. Second, Facebook is one of the most popular social media sites in the world, and in particular in Latin America<sup>23</sup> and in Mexico.<sup>24</sup> According to a 2016 study conducted by IAB Mexico, Facebook is currently the most popular social media platform in Mexico.<sup>25</sup> Today, 97% of Mexicans with access to Internet have a Facebook account.<sup>26</sup> Finally, as Décary-Hétu and Morelli noted in their study, the reduced level of privacy at Facebook sites over recent years has created “a goldmine of information for researchers.”<sup>27</sup> The methods employed in this study intend to create a model, which can be replicated to analyze the behavior of criminal groups in this and other social networking platforms in future research efforts.

## The Scope of the Online Presence of Mexican DTOs

More than 350 accounts associated with the selected Mexican DTOs were identified throughout this study. Of those, 150 active and likely authentic accounts were included in the analysis. This demonstrates that members of Mexican DTOs are actively engaging in the use of social media, and specifically, in the use of Facebook. Table 1, below, presents the distribution of these 150 accounts by cartel as well as some basic summary statistics.

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<sup>22</sup> Nicole B Ellison, Charles Steinfield and Cliff Lampe, "The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12:3 (July, 2007): 1143–1168, available at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x/full>.

<sup>23</sup> According to The Statistics Portal, there are over 230 million active Facebook users in Latin America; See: “Number of Facebook Users in Latin America from 2014 to 2019 (in millions),” *Statista* (2106) available at: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/282350/number-of-facebook-users-in-latin-america/>.

<sup>24</sup> According to a 2014 article posted in latinink.com, 90% of Internet users in Mexico have a Facebook account. Mexico has 65 million Internet users. See: Fernando Gimenez, “4 Key Growth Areas Among Mexican Internet Users in 2015,” *Latin Link*, December 2014, available at: <http://latinlink.usmediaconsulting.com/2014/12/4-key-growth-areas-among-mexican-internet-users-in-2015/>.

<sup>25</sup> *Estudio de consumo y medios dispositivos entre internautas mexicanos*, IAB Mexico, March 2016, available at: <http://www.iabmexico.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IABMx-ECMyD2016.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Décary-Hétu and Morselli, "Gang Presence in Social Network Sites."

**Table 1. The scope of the presence and activity of members of Mexican DTOs on Facebook**

Mexican DTO	Number of active accounts as of April 2016	Average of friends and followers per account	Number of open accounts	Number of private or semi-private accounts
Beltrán Leyva Organization	12	1,163	7	5
Caballeros Templarios	12	358	9	3
Gulf Cartel	17	145	12	5
La Familia Michoacana	3	346	3	0
Los Zetas	33	893	29	4
Sinaloa Cartel	73	2,966	42	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>48</b>

### *How are Mexican DTOs using Facebook?*

The findings of this study suggest that Mexican DTO members use Facebook primarily for personal reasons. It is important to note that there are significant differences, however, in the use of social media across the members of each organization and that the nature, culture, and internal dynamics of each group have a significant impact on how its members use social media.

For example, members of the Sinaloa Cartel use the platform to concisely and effectively communicate with the members of the organization, but most importantly, with civil society. The Sinaloa Cartel behave as “celebrities” and communicate with their “fans” through comments and posts. The users usually use the terms “*plebe*”<sup>28</sup> and “*compa*”<sup>29</sup> to refer to themselves, their

<sup>28</sup> The term “plebe” is short for “plebeyo” which means “plebeian.” This term is used in a friendly manner rather than in a disrespectful way in the state of Sinaloa. Even high-ranking members of the Sinaloa Cartel refer to themselves as “plebes.”

<sup>29</sup> The term “compa” is short for “compadre” which means “co-father.” This term is used between men to indicate a bond of friendship and trust. This term is commonly used between male members of the Sinaloa Cartel.

friends, and their followers in a friendly and approachable tone particular of the state of Sinaloa. On average, every Sinaloa Cartel affiliated account has a network of 2,966 friends and followers (Table 1). Furthermore, only 2% of the Sinaloa Cartel accounts are private, which indicates that the members of the organization want to be seen and “followed” on social media, and are interested in making their lives public. It is evident that the Sinaloa Cartel is the most popular and supported Mexican DTO today, and that the organization is regarded as an aspirational model for civil society and even other DTOs such as the Beltrán Leyva Organization, the Gulf Cartel, and the Caballeros Templarios.

In contrast, members of Los Zetas tend to use Facebook in a highly individual fashion, specifically to brag and show off their lifestyle and their possessions. A significant tendency towards violence and aggression is notorious, which contrasted sharply with the rest of the organizations. The members of Los Zetas also share significantly more content, particularly images, showing drugs and their use of these substances. This observation is significant in the context of the debate over the nature and structure of Los Zetas. Scholars and journalists have claimed that this organization has “no morals” and does not follow any “codes of conduct,”<sup>30</sup> as opposed to other organizations, and the online behavior of its members confirms these claims.

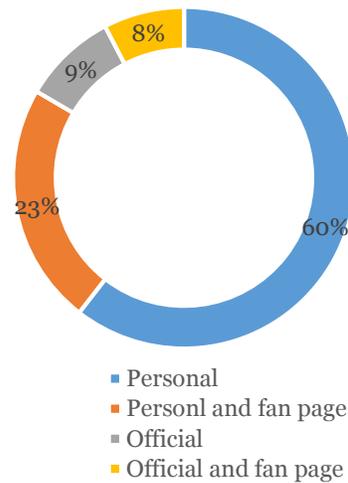
In contrast with Los Zetas, the Beltrán Leyva Cartel, the Sinaloa Cartel, La Familia Michoacana, and the Caballeros Templarios do not appear to seek public attention or popularity through social media platforms. They have comparatively few accounts and friends/followers (Table 1). This could be related to the “social” and “religious” components behind the ideology of these organizations.

### *The Individual vs. the Organization*

Eighty-three percent of the total accounts identified across all DTOs are personal accounts, which means that they are owned by an individual who identifies him or herself as such, and only 17% are official pages, which are accounts created under the name of the organization (Figure 1).

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<sup>30</sup> Max G. Manwaring, “A “New” Dynamic in the Western Hemisphere Security Environment: The Mexican Zetas and Other Private Armies,” *Strategic Studies Institute*, September 2009, available at: <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=940>.

**Figure 1. Account Type**

In contrast with the rest of the organizations, all of the accounts belonging to La Familia Michoacana operate as open accounts (Table 1) under the name of the organization, revealing no individual identities, and are mostly used to share narco-messages. In the last decade, Mexican DTOs have resorted to using different channels to communicate with civil society, the government, and their enemies, the most emblematic communication channels being the “*narco mantas*” or “narco-banners,” which are “painted signs, manifestos, and graffiti,”<sup>31</sup> created by Mexican DTOs. Today, we see this trend replicated in social media. Mexican DTOs are not only embracing the benefits of technology, but are finding in social media a free and uncensored space which allows them to communicate massively without depending on the media,<sup>32</sup> a trend also observed among terrorist organizations.<sup>33</sup>

### *Individualism and Narco-Culture*

In their study, Décary-Hétu and Morselli found that “gang presence on social networking sites is linked primarily to the promotion of a general gang or street culture through individual displays.”<sup>34</sup> This study discovered a

<sup>31</sup> Guillermprieto, “The Narcovirus.”

<sup>32</sup> In Mexico the media has agreed to not display or comment narco-banners and their content as it is believed to empower these organizations by allowing their message to reach a massive audience, which is the ultimate goal of these displays. In this context, the Internet offers Mexican DTOs independence from the media and a massive platform to spread their messages.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce Hoffman, “The Old Media, Terrorism, and Public Opinion,” in *Inside Terrorism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> David Décary-Hétu and Carlo Morselli, “Crime Facilitation Purposes of Social Networking Sites: A Review and Analysis of the “Cyberbanging” Phenomenon,” *Law Enforcement and Policy Branch Public Safety Canada*, Report #015, 2010, available at:

pronounced tendency of the users to share “selfies,” comments, images, and posts where they brag about themselves and their lifestyles as DTO members. While this study found a significant amount of expressions of narco-culture through individual displays, the “promotion” of narco-culture by DTO members appears to be an unconscious effect of their presence online, rather than an orchestrated, collective effort to promote it in every DTO, except in the case of the Sinaloa Cartel and its sub-group, Virus Antrax. This study also found important differences in narco-culture across cartels. For example, it is clear that the Sinaloa Cartel possesses a unique ideology that is well rooted in the organization and the social life in the state of Sinaloa. At the center of this ideology is a widespread personality cult towards its leader, El Chapo Guzmán, a phenomenon not observed in any other group. The personality cult is not only predominant within the ranks of the organization, where the members openly express their desire to serve, protect, and die for “*El Jefe*,” “*El Señor*,” or “The Lord,” but also in the everyday life of Sinaloa’s society, where the average citizen is proud to protect or assist the organization and its leader. In the last year, especially since Guzmán’s latest capture by the authorities in January 2016, the manifestations of support for the leader have proliferated on Facebook.

In contrast, the narco-culture in the state of Michoacán revolves around modesty and values associated with the rural working class. Religious elements and an ideology of “socialism” are at the core of the culture of these organizations. A 2014 New York Times article mentioned that La Familia Michoacana had “boasted a primitive, pseudo-religious ideology and claimed to be concerned with bettering the lives of the citizens of Michoacán.”<sup>35</sup> Overall, this organization claims to have a “social duty.” In some Facebook posts identified throughout this study, the organization expresses that it will “perform the activities that the authorities are incapable of performing,” and that it is “here to serve the society.” Another post stated that the organization’s duty is “to guard the order in the state and to prevent robbery, extortions, kidnappings, corruption and abuses from the government.” The social character of this organization and its direct references to the deficiencies of the government are unique in the spectrum of Mexican DTOs. This trait of the group could be the reason behind the somewhat modest behavior of its users on social media (Table 1), which contrasts with the over-

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<http://gangsquebec.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Crime-Facilitation-Purposes-of-Social-Networking-Sites-A-Review-and-Analysis-of-the-Cyberbanging-Phenomenon.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Enrique Krauze, “Mexico’s Vigilantes on the March,” *New York Times*, February 3, 2014, available at: [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/opinion/krauze-mexico-vigilantes-on-the-march.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/04/opinion/krauze-mexico-vigilantes-on-the-march.html?_r=0).

exposed members of the rest of the organizations. Another explanation could be that the social base of support of La Familia Michoacana and Caballeros Templarios is significantly different to that of the DTOs located in the north of Mexico. In this scenario, the groups' efforts to recruit and promote the organization contrast significantly with those of other DTOs. The Michoacán groups clearly center their efforts to appeal to society in reinforcing and fueling the widespread social discontent and dissatisfaction with the government, while other organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel emphasize narco-culture and a way out of poverty or social bond in their branding and outreach strategies.

### *The Absence of Privacy*

Seventy-five percent of the analyzed accounts have no privacy settings. In a country where 98% of crimes go unpunished each year, according to INEGI,<sup>36</sup> DTO members are proud of their affiliation to these organizations and have no fear of being identified and associated with these groups by their immediate circle of friends and family, their community, nor by law enforcement agencies. DTO members are confident that they will not be brought to justice and, therefore, feel free to display their affiliation to Mexican DTOs with pride in social media. The openness of the analyzed accounts also provided significant insight into the network of friends and followers of the members of Mexican DTOs. Each of the analyzed accounts are connected to an average of 978 users (Table 1) who are aware of the users' affiliation to a criminal organization. This observation also provides a clear picture of the growing "mainstrimization" of the narco-affiliation and the narco-lifestyle, as Guevara has noted.<sup>37</sup> The normalization of these criminal groups and their activities, particularly in the most marginalized communities, should be at the center of law enforcement agencies' concerns, but somehow remains ignored. These findings inevitably raise questions about the efficiency of law enforcement agencies in Mexico, about the rampant levels of impunity that these criminal organizations enjoy, and about the collusion of the authorities with these groups. As Montenegro concluded in his book, it is alarming and indignating how much information about the members of Mexican DTOs is available online and how few arrests and convictions actually take place.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>See:

[http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/metodologias/envipe/marco\\_conceptual\\_envipe.pdf](http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/metodologias/envipe/marco_conceptual_envipe.pdf).

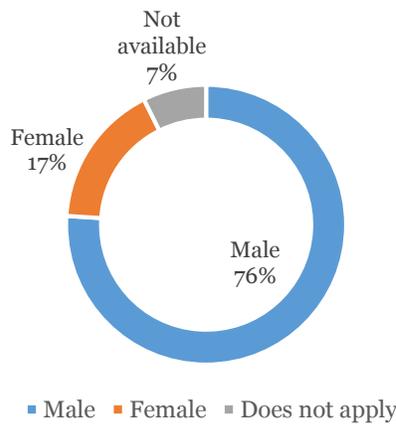
<sup>37</sup> Guevara, "Propaganda in Mexico's Drug War."

<sup>38</sup> Montenegro, *Narco Juniors*.

## Demographics

Although men primarily comprise the membership of Mexican DTOs (Figure 2), as the literature suggests, these groups are increasingly resorting to the recruitment and empowerment of youngsters. According to the results of this study, the average Mexican DTO member with an active presence on Facebook today is between 20 and 30 years old (Table 2). In general, it is evident that the many individuals within the younger generations envision Mexican DTOs as an aspirational model.

**Figure 2. Gender**



**Table 2. Age**

Age	Percentage of DTO members
Teen	7%
20s	31%
30s or more	15%
Data unavailable	47%

This study confirmed the speculations about Los Zetas increasingly relying on teenagers. Today, 90% of the members of Los Zetas who are active on Facebook report that they are between 15 and 30 years of age; 39% of its members are teenagers (see Table 3 in Appendix). Most of Los Zetas' members who are active on Facebook seem to be low-ranking and live in

conditions of poverty where teen pregnancies, regular abuse of drugs and alcohol, violence, and recurrent deaths in their families and immediate social circles are part of their daily lives.

The results also suggest that 77% of the females involved in Los Zetas are teenagers participating in the lowest ranks of the organization, which demonstrates a growing trend of female involvement in the younger generations. Most of the young women in the organization are depicted wearing a set of radios and cell phones, which indicate their role as “*halcones*”<sup>39</sup> or “hawks.” Others are observed displaying bags of cocaine and marijuana, apparently for distribution. The majority enjoys posting selfies of themselves in sexualized contexts and displaying guns, portraying themselves as seductive killers. In “The Evolution of Los Zetas in Mexico and Central America,” George W. Grayson noted that women are increasingly participating in Mexican DTOs and are assuming roles that often involve seducing a rival to negotiate an agreement or to murder. The women occupying these roles are called “*panteras*” or “panthers” and are increasingly visible in the online activities of Mexican DTOs. Los Zetas is the most brutal and violent organization in Mexico today, and therefore, the increasing involvement of teenagers in this organization will inevitably have a significant impact on the social fabric of the country in the next decade and will redefine the dynamics of Mexican DTOs in the next decade.

Contrary to the trend observed in Los Zetas, the majority of the women in the Sinaloa Cartel seem to be in their 20s or 30s (Appendix, Table 3), high-ranking and part of the organization’s “elite,” typically daughters, nieces, and wives of the most influential families in the organization. All of the women identify themselves as “*Buchonas*”: Highly sexualized and attractive women with plastic surgeries, long hair, and usually tight clothes and high heels. Most of the women tend to profile themselves as sex symbols but also as “tough, ruthless women” or “*femmes fatales*.”<sup>40</sup> Despite being part of the elite, most of them display their capacities to use guns and to manage entire squads within the organization. The females of the Sinaloa Cartel are actively involved in operations and are respected and supported by the males of the

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<sup>39</sup> The word “*halcones*” refers to the people who are massively “subcontracted” by Mexican DTOs to report suspicious activity to its actual members, such as the presence of the army, the police, or rival organizations in their territory. These subcontracted employees are usually taxi drivers, teenagers, and even transit officers. The organization typically gives these employees a set of radios and cellphones to communicate with the members of the group.

<sup>40</sup> The women of the organization are proud to call themselves “*cabronas*.”

group. One of them confessed to having killed for the first time in a post from early 2016, and claimed that she would do it again to defend herself.

## Internal Dynamics

The results of this study also provided significant insight into the internal dynamics of the analyzed groups, demonstrating that the analysis of social media provides access to valuable information that can enrich the knowledge and understanding of Mexican DTOs and of their members as social beings. Table 4 (in the Appendix) presents the results of an analysis of internal dynamic variables across cartels.

### *Group Cohesiveness and Pride*

The results in Table 4 indicate that the cartels with the strongest group cohesiveness are La Familia Michoacana and the Sinaloa Cartel, while Los Zetas and the Caballeros Templarios are the weakest. The analysis of the accounts indicate that the nature of group cohesiveness could vary significantly across DTOs.

Eighty-two percent of the members of Mexican DTOs studied here use Facebook to brag about themselves and their lifestyle as members of their organization (Appendix, Table 4). These displays often include references in the form of photographs, comments, or posts in which the individual makes reference to other members of the organization and his or her day-to-day activities in the DTO. The analysis of these displays confirms that the members of the Mexican DTO elite who are at the center of the journalistic focus on DTOs' use of social media represent only a small percentage of the population analyzed in this study. It was also noted that these displays are welcomed and encouraged by the users' immediate network of friends, showing that the narco-lifestyle has the ability to create an aspirational role model that seems accessible for many and which is increasingly becoming mainstream.

Meanwhile, 54% of the analyzed accounts display pride for the organization. In the majority of the cases (73%), the users resort to generic images to express pride for the organization. These images usually include the name or logo of the DTO with particular codes, insignias, and other emblematic images. In terms of narco-corridos, 40% of the accounts share videos or lyrics of narco-corridos that make reference to the organization of their affiliation (Appendix, Table 4). The members of the Sinaloa Cartel (54%) and the Beltrán Leyva Organization (50%) tend to share narco-corridos to express

pride of their organization the most. The Gulf Cartel (25%) and Los Zetas (24%) also resort to narco-corridos but do so with less frequency. This could be related to the scarce social support and popularity that these two organizations have in comparison to that of the Sinaloa Cartel and the Beltrán Leyva Organization.

Forty-nine percent of the analyzed accounts display an affiliation to a Mexican DTO in the “works at” section in the users’ profile. It is evident that that the drug trade is increasingly perceived as a labor market and a formal business. Members of groups such as the Sinaloa Cartel refer to the criminal organization as “the enterprise” or “the company,” labels that demonstrate not only the respect for the organization but the growing consolidation of these organizations as legitimate economic alternatives for the working class. These labels have redefined the morals around these groups by diminishing the negative connotation associated with the drug trade industry and by justifying its existence as a legitimate business that provides jobs. This capacity to legitimize and rebrand drug-related activities to the point where they are no longer synonymous with crime, shame, and evil in the collective imaginary has been one of the most successful strategies of the Sinaloa Cartel since its origin and it is one of the most visible aspects of its members’ activity on Facebook today.

### *Group Structure*

In recent years, academic and journalistic literature has made repeated references to the pronounced fragmentation of Mexican DTOs into smaller cells or sub-groups. The processes of “balkanization”<sup>41</sup> and fragmentation pose significant challenges for law enforcement agencies trying to understand and weaken these groups and has led to increasing violence in several states. This study uncovered important data on the existence of sub-groups, the hierarchy of these groups, their tactics, and the recruitment dynamics within these groups.

This research confirmed the existence of a Los Zetas sub-group called Nectar Lima. While the Internet is plagued with narco-corridos and music related to the group, there is no literature on the Nectar Lima sub-group. The analysis here revealed that the group is mainly composed of teenagers (under the age of 20), and some are as young as 15 years old. There is a significant

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<sup>41</sup> “Mexico’s Drug War: Balkanization Leads to Regional Challenges,” *Stratfor*, April 18, 2013, available at: <https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/mexicos-drug-war-balkanization-leads-regional-challenges>.

involvement of females in the group, a significant contrast with other organizations and the main cell of Los Zetas. According to the information collected from their social media accounts, these young members serve in the lowest positions of the sub-group, operating as mules or *halcones* for the organization, although most of them describe their ranking as “Commander of Nectar Lima.” In their totality, the members of the sub-group belong to the lower socio-economic classes and live in poor areas and dysfunctional environments. Most of the women are highly sexualized and some openly engage in prostitution, using Facebook to advertise. The men display highly sexualized images, videos, comments, and posts and often seek sexual relations through the platform.

The findings of this study also provide significant insight into the Sinaloa Cartel’s sub-group Virus Antrax, to which 54% of the users claim an affiliation. The sub-group Virus Antrax is the enforcement arm of the Sinaloa Cartel, and its primary goal is to murder the group’s enemies. One of the most significant elements identified are the high levels of pride expressed by its members. The majority identifies as “Hitmen” and often talk about death as something they embrace and respect. Members of the group are devoted to the Holy Death and, most importantly, show their desire and their will to serve “The Boss,” El Chapo. The information provided by the users in their Facebook accounts speaks of a high cohesion inside the sub-group and of a high level of trust and loyalty within its members. The users venerate their duties as part of the organization and the leaders tend to encourage the lower-ranking members through gifts and public recognition. Members of Virus Antrax often receive a diamond ring in the shape of a skull (the organization’s symbol), a diamond watch with a skull, or a pistol covered in gold or diamonds when they achieve something or do something “courageous” for the organization. No other group or sub-group analyzed in this study displayed similar devotion, loyalty, and commitment from its members towards the organization and its leaders.

Furthermore, it was surprising to find that 22% of all analyzed accounts display strategic and tactical information on the organization’s activities. The most common information of this type being shared on Facebook is the users’ telephone number and/or “BB Pin.”<sup>42</sup> The data revealed that the vast majority of DTO members use WhatsApp and BlackBerry messenger to communicate with each other. This trend is also visible in terrorist

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<sup>42</sup> A BB Pin is BlackBerry’s Personal Identification Number which allows its users to communicate through a free messaging application (BlackBerry Messenger) with other Blackberry users.

organizations such as ISIS. WhatsApp is known for providing significant encryption features, while BlackBerry is known as the “safest” telephone in the world.<sup>43</sup> Members commonly share their new number in a regular post and ask their network of friends to “add them” or to contact them. This study also found that DTO members who share information considered as “tactical” in this study often share their current location and their travel plans and details. The users often post comments and images of themselves arriving to a certain destination and they usually comment on the purpose of their trip. In several cases, members expose who they are pursuing and what the purpose of their mission is in certain cities. These posts are often accompanied by images of the users “on the field,” carrying guns in trucks and covering their faces with masks.

### *Recruitment*

The literature reviewed for this study frequently mentions the use of social media by Mexican DTOs to recruit new members.<sup>44</sup> However, these discussions do not make reference to any concrete studies. This study found that there are only a few, and apparently isolated, efforts to recruit new members through Facebook within the Sinaloa Cartel and La Familia Michoacana. In the Sinaloa Cartel only 3% of members with an active presence on Facebook have displayed explicit efforts to recruit new members. According to the information in these accounts, the recruitment takes place in Facebook’s private messaging system, as those interested are redirected to this platform. One of the accounts belonging to a female member of Virus Antrax was identified soliciting 20 security escorts through a self-generated post. Her post had over 30 replies of users offering their services, some of them women. The other user used the platform to ask, “is anybody here a Kaibil?”<sup>45</sup> and to comment that he was hiring Kaibiles. In the case of La Familia Michoacana, the recruitment efforts of members presented different

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<sup>43</sup> According to a ZD Net article, “BlackBerrys are, at least for now, one of the very few mobile devices approved by the US government for low-level classification document sharing, but the iPhone is not far behind.” See: Zack Whittaker, “Obama’s Gadgets: What Tech Does the President Use?” *ZD Net*, February 16, 2016, available at: <http://www.zdnet.com/pictures/presidential-gadgets-what-technology-does-obama-use/6/>.

<sup>44</sup> Guevara, “Propaganda in Mexico’s Drug War.”

<sup>45</sup> A Kaibil is a member of Guatemala’s special operation military forces. It is well known that Mexican DTOs are increasingly recruiting Kaibiles due to their readiness to join these organizations and their professional military training. This trend was started by Los Zetas but has been followed by other organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel. See: James Bargent, “US Reports Shows Zetas Corruption of Guatemala’s Special Forces,” *Insight Crime*, November 8, 2014, available at: <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/us-report-shows-zetas-corruption-of-guatemalas-special-forces>.

traits. One of the accounts often displays pictures of various women who the user claims are “prostitutes of the organization.” The user stated that if anyone was interested in having access to these women, they had to join the organization.

Overall, it is possible to conclude that Mexican DTO members are not actively and consciously engaging in recruitment efforts through social media platforms. This argument is reinforced by the fact that DTOs are viewed as an aspirational model for many, and that entire families, couples, and groups of friends are involved in these organizations, which indicates that recruitment could most likely take place in-person and through acquaintances. However, the exposure to the narco-lifestyle and its glamorization on social media is reaching communities that it would probably not reach otherwise, as Décarry-Hétu and Morelli have argued. In this context, it is possible to argue that, while Mexican DTO members are not actively seeking to recruit new members through social media yet, their online activities are enriching and consolidating a solid supply of human capital that is increasingly reaching out to these organizations through social media or because of social media.

#### *Relations across Mexican DTOs*

The study of these social media accounts confirmed the allegations that some organizations are building temporary alliances to defeat Los Zetas. The information found in the accounts associated with the Gulf Cartel, the Beltrán Leyva Organization, and the Sinaloa Cartel indicate that these three organizations are now in a strategic alliance to eliminate Los Zetas from the north of Mexico. In the case of the Beltrán Leyva Organization, 58% of the users mentioned the Sinaloa Cartel and its sub-group, Virus Antrax, as the group’s allies. This study found that the Caballeros Templarios also claim an alliance to the Sinaloa Cartel in order to expel Los Zetas from Michoacán.

This study also found that the users mostly use Facebook to build an image of power for themselves and the organization, rather than actively engaging in cyber-conflict.<sup>46</sup> Despite the fact that each organization uses Facebook to interact in a different way with its rivals, in general, the dynamic is centered

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<sup>46</sup> Several law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and in Europe observing gang activity on social media have warned that the confrontation that starts online translate into direct violent confrontations in the real world.

on the empowerment of the organization rather than in launching direct attacks against the enemy.<sup>47</sup>

### *Relations with the State*

Contrary to what was initially expected, Mexican DTO members do not resort to Facebook to conduct attacks against their rivals, nor against the government. Only 7% of the analyzed accounts make threats or display intimidation efforts against the government, politicians, and law enforcement agencies in Mexico. However, 21% of the users resort to the platform to make references in the form of mockery or critique of the government, indicating that Mexican DTOs are engaged in a dynamic of competition against the state in terms of legitimacy and social support and, therefore, the members of these organizations tend to share posts, images, and videos to discredit the government, to evidence its weaknesses, and, most importantly, to criminalize politicians and authorities. Overall, members of Mexican DTOs tend to highlight the incompetence of the armed forces of Mexico and expose acts of corruption and theft involving politicians. There is a growing competition between DTOs and the government for legitimacy and public support. While the efforts of members of Mexican DTOs to somehow damage the reputation and credibility of the government and to win the hearts and minds was surprising, a more concerning finding was the widespread success of this tactic to engage civil society. Despite the geographical and cultural differences across the analyzed organizations, when it comes to criticizing or attacking the state, all of the groups enjoy widespread support from their networks. No signs of rejection or efforts to defend the government from the accusations of Mexican DTOs were identified in any of the groups. In this context, it can be concluded that, as Castillo states, Mexican DTOs “have developed comprehensive Inform and Influence Activities (IIA) strategies that seek to gather support from civilians and coerce vulnerable government institutions while at the same time weakening the resolve of their opponents.”<sup>48</sup>

This observation also confirms that, contrary to what the government and several academics have claimed about the nature of these organizations, Mexican DTOs are increasingly involved in politics and are embracing an unprecedented activist logic to manipulate politicians and law enforcement officials and to compete with them in terms of support, credibility, and

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<sup>47</sup> These findings are exclusive to Facebook, and the dynamics could be different in other platforms, such as YouTube where several organizations share gruesome videos of their members torturing members of rival organizations.

<sup>48</sup> Castillo, “The Mexican Cartels’ Employment of Inform and Influence Activities.”

legitimacy. This is one of the most worrisome trends observed throughout this study. The already-damaged credibility of the Mexican state and growing social discontent are likely to continue to deteriorate its legitimacy in the following years; the use of social media by DTO members will play a significant role in accelerating this process. The Mafia State<sup>49</sup> that Mexico is becoming will be empowered by the enmity and the growing apathy of the Mexican people.

## Conclusions and Future Research

Mexican DTOs pose the most alarming and direct threat to Mexico's national security today and are increasingly becoming a major source of instability in the region. The repeated failure of national and international anti-narcotics policies and strategies provide evidence of a profound and persistent lack of understanding of these organizations. This study has argued that, in order to generate a more comprehensive understanding, it is fundamental to gain greater insight and intelligence on the groups' nature, character, and internal dynamics. A valuable source of this type of insight and intelligence today is social media, which has been gaining relevance in the fields of terrorism and criminology, but has remained underexplored in the field of Mexican DTOs.

The study conducted, collected, and analyzed primary data from 150 Facebook accounts currently active and likely to belong to members of Mexican DTOs. The analysis determined the scope of these organizations' presence on Facebook, generated a comprehensive demographic snapshot of the members of Mexican DTOs with an active presence on the platform, and provided insight into the internal dynamics of these criminal organizations. These findings highlight the fact that, first, Mexican DTO members predominantly use this platform in a highly individual fashion. Second, while in most of the cases it is not their intention to promote or reinforce narco-culture as suggested in the literature, their use of Facebook is enabling the proliferation and normalization of narco-culture by making it more accessible, approachable, and by allowing it to reach people who would probably not have been reached otherwise. Third, and contrary to what was expected, it was not challenging to identify legitimate and active accounts for analysis, and, surprisingly, most of the accounts have no privacy settings. These observations evidence the need to increase the analysis of these free and publicly available resources to understand criminal actors such as DTOs. They also highlight the current situation of impunity and lack of law

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<sup>49</sup> See: Moises Naim, "Mafia States," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2012, available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2012-04-20/mafia-states>.

enforcement in Mexico. On Facebook, members of Mexican DTOs willingly display their locations, their relatives and partners, their faces, their explicit affiliation to and involvement in the organization, and themselves in incriminating circumstances. Finally, to an alarming and unexpected degree, Mexican DTO members are not only tolerated but supported, cheered, encouraged, and admired by their network of friends, which often include friends, relatives, and members of their communities.

In this sense, one of the greatest challenges that law enforcement agencies face today and will continue to face in the near future when combating DTOs is the growing social support, admiration, and normalization of DTO life and activities in Mexico. In a country living in poverty and with widespread social discontent, DTO members are admired anti-heroes. Furthermore, the findings of this study highlight the pronounced differences across Mexican DTOs in their nature, membership, and internal dynamics. The particularities highlighted in this study suggest that anti-narcotics strategies must necessarily be tailored to each organization, replacing the one-size-fits-all approach that has predominated in Mexico and in Latin America in the last decades. Finally, the analysis presented here demonstrates quite clearly that a more comprehensive understanding of Mexican DTOs is needed and that the analysis of social media accounts offers significant and untapped intelligence and insight into these organizations. As Castillo concluded in his study, the Mexican State's core strategy of targeting DTO leaders is insufficient to weaken these organizations and limit their power over civil society. The Mexican State should start developing its own Inform and Influence campaigns in order to counteract the influence of Mexican DTOs.<sup>50</sup> In doing so, cooperation with the Private Sector and, specifically, social media companies to limit the online presence and activities of these organizations, will be fundamental. Several lessons can be learned from the efforts of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France in combating the terrorist use of the Internet.

### *Future Research*

This study has demonstrated that there is sufficient information in the Facebook profiles of the members of Mexican DTOs to conduct Social Network Analyses on targeted individuals or cells. This research intends to serve as the foundation for future studies of this nature. Furthermore, this study has demonstrated that there are significant differences in the nature of the use of social media across DTOs. These differences are directly related to

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<sup>50</sup> Castillo, "The Mexican Cartels' Employment of Inform and Influence Activities."

the individual character, narco-culture, and ideology of each group. Further research of this aspect of the use of social media by DTOs could provide significant insight into the internal dynamics of each organization. Finally, the research conducted for this study demonstrated that there is a staggering absence of information regarding the incorporation of the analysis of social media in the anti-narcotics strategy in Mexico and in Latin America, opening a promising path for academic research and policy recommendations in the field.

## Appendix

**Table 3. User Account Demographics and Location by Cartel**

DTO	Demographics											
	Gender		Age				Marital Status			Location		
	Male	Female	Teen	20s	30s or more	Unknown	Unknown	Single	In a relationship	Married or Engaged	Displays Location	Main locations
<b>Beltrán Leyva Organization</b>	100%	0%	0%	27%	33%	40%	39%	16%	40%	5%	83%	Culiacán and Mazatlán, Sinaloa
<b>Gulf Cartel</b>	100%	0%	0%	53%	24%	23%	65%	12%	17%	6%	64%	Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas
<b>Los Zetas</b>	72%	28%	39%	48%	10%	3%	43%	24%	27%	6%	72%	Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas
<b>La Familia Michoacana</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	Michoacán
<b>Caballeros Templarios</b>	100%	0%	0%	6%	6%	88%	67%	16%	8%	8%	83%	Michoacán
<b>Sinaloa Cartel</b>	73%	22%	2%	53%	18%	27%	41%	23%	16%	20%	64%	Culiacán and Mazatlán, Sinaloa

**Table 4. The Internal Dynamics of Mexican DTOs**

DTO	Internal Dynamics																
	Group Pride			Comradery	Sub-Group		Position	Tactical information	Recruitment Efforts	Enemies				Allies		Displays Threats or intimidation efforts	Displays References
	Displays bragging	Displays Group pride	Displays affiliation to organization	Displays	Displays affiliaion to a sub group	Sub-group	Displays	Displays	Displays	Displays	Enemies	Displays intimidation efforts	Makes direct threats against enemies	Displays	Allies		
<b>Beltrán Leyva Organization</b>	83%	58%	67%	41%	0%	n/a	50%	17%	17%	17%	Los Zetas	25%	8%	58%	Sinaloa Cartel	0%	8%
<b>Gulf Cartel</b>	76%	60%	53%	70%	0%	n/a	41%	30%	0%	17%	Los Zetas	76%	35%	35%	Sinaloa Cartel	0%	35%
<b>Los Zetas</b>	75%	56%	43%	40%	50%	Nectar Lima	30%	21%	0%	12%	Sinaloa Cartel, Gulf Cartel	54%	15%	6%	Los Zetas, Noroeste Cartel	0%	15%
<b>La Familia Michoacana</b>	66%	100%	66%	83%	33%	Fuerza Nueva	66%	33%	33%	33%	Sinaloa Cartel, Jalisco Cartel New Generation	33%	33%	0%	n/a	0%	3%
<b>Caballeros Templarios</b>	8%	52%	66%	42%	17%	Gente Nueva, H3	21%	25%	0%	17%	Jalisco Cartel New Generation	50%	17%	17%	Sinaloa Cartel, H3	25%	33%
<b>Sinaloa Cartel</b>	99%	68%	45%	53%	54%	Virus Antrax	18%	23%	3%	4%	Los Zetas	40%	15%	12%	Gulf Cartel	15%	32%